

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

LAB-04 SIL-01 ITC-01 /092 W

-----083009 030511Z /21

R 030452Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6697

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, JA

SUBJECT: UAW DELEGATION MEETS WITH JAPANESE AUTO

- MANUFACTURERS

1. SUMMARY. VISITING UAW DELEGATION HEADED BY VICE PRESIDENT PAT GREATHOUSE DISAPPOINTED TO LEARN, AFTER MEETING WITH NISSAN, TOYOTA AND OTHER MAJOR AUTO MANUFACTURERS, THAT SUPPOSED JAPANESE ENTHUSIASM FOR AUTO ASSEMBLY PLANTS OR OTHER MANUFACTURING FACILITIES IN U.S. HAS WANED CONSIDERABLY. UAW OFFICIALS SAID THAT WHILE THEY WOULD NOT NOW CALL FOR RESTRICTIVE USG POLICIES VIS-A-VIS IMPORTS OF JAPANESE AUTOS, THEY MAY LAUNCH WELL-FINANCED "BUY AMERICAN" CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

2. UNITED AUTO WORKERS VICE PRESIDENT PAT GREATHOUSE AND INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR LEO SUSLOW, PASSING THROUGH TOKYO MARCH 30 ON RETURN FROM VISIT WITH AMBASSADOR WOODCOCK IN PEKING, TOLD LABATT THAT THEIR RECENT 10-DAY STAY IN JAPAN AT INVITATION AUTO WORKERS CONFEDERATION (JIDOSHA SOREN) HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTMENT. ACCORDING TO GREATHOUSE, DELEGATION UNABLE TO OBTAIN COMMITMENT FROM EVEN ONE JAPANESE AUTO MANUFACTURER TO OPEN ASSEMBLY

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PLANT IN U.S. WHILE TOP MANAGEMENT AT NISSAN, TOYOTA, HONDA AND IZUSA ALL MET WITH DELEGATION (TOYOTA OFFICIALS CLAIMED MEETING WAS FIRST TIME THEY HAD DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN LABOR LEADERS), ALL COMPANIES INDICATED THAT BECAUSE FUTURE SALES PROSPECTS IN U.S. MARKET NOT PROMISING AND BECAUSE THEY FEARED ESTABLISHMENT PLANT WOULD RESULT IN "EXPORT OF JOBS" FROM JAPAN, THEY

NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT IN U.S. IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. GREATHOUSE SAID HE VERY DISAPPOINTED IN JAPANESE MANUFACTURERS' REACTION, PARTICULARLY SINCE HIS PREVIOUS MEETINGS WITH THEM IN JULY 1977 HAD LEFT HIM WITH IMPRESSION THEY WOULD MAKE DEFINITE AND POSITIVE DECISION TO OPEN U.S. PLANT BY EARLY 1978. MOREOVER, IN INTERIM, JAPANESE AUTO EXPORTS TO U.S. HAD INCREASED.

3. BOTH UAW OFFICIALS SAID THAT JAPANESE AUTO MANUFACTURERS NO LONGER WERE MAKING FAVORABLE NOISES ABOUT U.S. INVESTMENT BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT U.S. PRESSURE ON THEM TO DO SO HAD DECREASED AS RESULT OF IMPROVEMENT IN DETROIT'S PROSPECTS OWING TO INTRODUCTION OF U.S.-MADE SMALL CAR LINES. GREATHOUSE SAID HE WARNED JAPANESE THAT WHILE THEIR FAILURE TO INVEST IN U.S. WOULD NOT CAUSE UAW TO ABANDON ITS COMMITMENT TO FREE TRADE IN FAVOR OF USG MEASURES (E.G.OMA, HIGHER TARIFFS OR QUOTAS) TO LIMIT AUTO IMPORTS, UAW WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO LAUNCH EXTENSIVE "BUY AMERICAN" CAMPAIGN IN ORDER TO PROTECT U.S. WORKERS' JOBS. GREATHOUSE NOTED RUEFULLY THAT HE NOW OF OPINION THAT ONLY WAY TO CONVINCE JAPANESE MANUFACTURERS TO RESPOND TO LEGITIMATE U.S. REQUESTS WAS TO APPLY CONTINUOUS PRESSURE TO THEM.

4. UAW OFFICIALS SAID ONLY BRIGHT SPOT IN DELEGATION'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JAPAN VISIT WAS POSITIVE AND COURAGEOUS ATTITUDE DISPLAYED BY JIDOSHA SOREN PRESIDENT SHIOJI. GREATHOUSE SAID SHIOJI TOLD THEM THAT JAPANESE UNION HAD NO OBJECTION TO OPENING OF JAPANESE AUTO PLANT IN U.S. AND, IN FRONT OF THEM, HAD TOLD NISSAN OFFICIALS NOT TO USE ARGUMENT ABOUT JOB EXPORT TO JUSTIFY RELUCTANCE TO INVEST IN U.S. "SINCE JOBS WERE CONCERN OF UNION, NOT OF MANAGEMENT." GREATHOUSE SAID THAT SHIOJI WAS VERY MUCH THE LABOR STATESMAN AND HAD MADE NO BONES ABOUT HIS INTEREST IN BECOMING EITHER NEXT PRESIDENT OF DOMEI OR NEXT HEAD OF THE METAL WORKERS COUNCIL (IMF-JC).
MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY, MEETING DELEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TOKYO05454
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780143-0349
Format: TEL
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780497/aaaadffa.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9fc509b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3088725
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UAW DELEGATION MEETS WITH JAPANESE AUTO - MANUFACTURERS
TAGS: ELAB, ETRN, JA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9fc509b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014